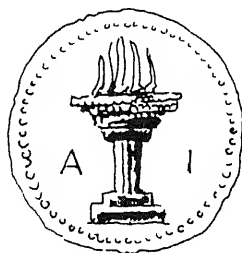


TEXTES ET MÉMOIRES

VOLUME XVI

IRANICA VARIA:
PAPERS IN HONOR OF
PROFESSOR EHSAN YARSHATER



1990

DIFFUSION
E.J. BRILL
LEIDEN

A. SHAHPUR SHAHBAZI

ON THE X^wADĀY-NĀMAG

The contributions to Iranian studies by Professor Ehsan Yarshater include a fine account on the X^wadāy-nāmag¹, the Sasanians' "fullest expression" of the Iranian national tradition². With profound learning, critical judgement and mastery of style characteristic of his writings, Prof Yarshater investigated the origins, evolution, subject matter and style of Iran's national history, enriching an already wealthy literature³. The following supplementary notes on the X^wadāy-nāmag⁴ are a fitting tribute, therefore, to a scholar who has come to typify the fulfillment of the benediction of another great Iranian—Darius⁵: *tya kunavāhy avatāy Ahuramazdā učāram kunautuv*.

1. The name

Orally transmitted for a long time, Iranian sagas and historical traditions were set down in writing in the sixth and seventh centuries in two ways: a) an official history, the X^wadāy-nāmag, which chronicled the story of Ērānšahr, as the later Sasanians envisaged it, from the creation of the world, the appearance of man and the first king, to the time of its composition⁶; b) independent treatises relating heroic or romantic deeds of famed Iranians⁷. At least three versions of the X^wadāy-nāmag existed (see below), but there was only one core. Since the Iranians, as many other nations, regarded history as the science of preserving the memory and words of ancient leaders (cf. the testimonies of Agathias and of Bahrām Gōr, below), their accounts of the past came to be collected in a series of documents called "Royal Records"⁸, or "Kings' Words" (*Suxanhā-yi Šāhān*)⁹ or "Kings' Records" (*Nāma-yi Xusravān*)¹⁰. Now, the term *x^watāy* < *x^wadāy* (lord)¹¹ was often used as an epithet of Iranian kings¹². "Written account", hence "history", was *nāmag*. The official history of the past, therefore, came to acquire the standard designation of X^wadāy-nāmag¹³. After the fall of the Sasanians, the Arabicized Iranians reserved the word X^watāy for "the

Lord", Arabic *Allāh*¹⁴ (except in some compound words¹⁵ or titles of *non-Islamic* kings¹⁶). Even the word X^wadāh-kušān "regicide", the epithet given to Yazdigard III's murderer, Māhōy-i Sūrī, and to his descendants¹⁷, was gradually altered to suit Muslim taste¹⁸.

The term X^wadāy-nāmag "Book of Kings/History of Lords" was translated into Arabic as *Siyar al-Mulūk*¹⁹, but the Iranians soon replaced it with a more practical designation: *Šāhnāma*²⁰. (In our discussion, the latter term refers to Firdausī's work).

2. Source materials

The compilers of the X^wadāy-nāmag used, beside old sagas, archival texts, narratives of contemporary events, and anachronistic recastings of recent events.

a. *Archival texts*. Already Šāpūr I and Kardēr attest in their inscriptions to the existence of royal and religious archival records²¹. The secretaries (*dabīrān*) formed a privileged class in Sasanian Iran²², and princely courtes as well as great fire temples possessed archives²³. Archival materials consisted of royal decrees of all kinds; petitions; records of payment and other Treasury items; chronicles of events; treaty documents; "testaments" and epistles left, allegedly or in reality, by learned and successful statesmen or religious leaders; scientific and pseudo-scientific works; literary specimens; and official handbooks on the arts of rulership, archery, polo, falconry, etc.²⁴. To these may be added "secret" documents such as historical "predictions"²⁵. A vivid description of record-keeping procedures has been given by Ibn al-Muqaffa', the translator of official Sasanian books on history and bureaucracy²⁶. For various categories of records, seals with different engravings were used²⁷. Thus, official decrees and treaties were stamped with a seal bearing the figure of a boar, one of the symbols of Vərəθrəyna/Bahrām, god of victory and patron of Iranian warriors²⁸. Menander Protector ends his account of the peace-negotiation between Petrus Patricius on behalf of Justinian, and Isedegusnaph (Īzad-Gušnasp) on behalf of Anōšēravān as follows²⁹:

Two copies of these documents were made and carefully compared to ensure identity of wording and content; and other copies were fastened with wax seals and stamped with the signets of the envoys as well as of twelve interpreters, six for each High Contracting Party, after which Isedegusnaph gave Petrus the original copy

written in Persian and another in the same language but *written in Greek letters*, receiving in return the original copy written in Greek as well as another in the same language but *written in Persian characters*, these second copies being consulted and serving as *aide memoires*.

Noting that a complete list of Persian kings was lacking in Western accounts³⁰, Agathias made it his "business to collect accurate information on the subject from official Persian sources (Περσικοὶ βίβλοι)³¹. Later he gave a summary of these sources as regards the history of the Sasanian period³²

Sergius the interpreter managed in fact during a stay in Persia to prevail upon the keepers of the royal archives to grant him access to the relevant literature Fortunately, when he stated that his sole purpose was to preserve even among our nation the memory of what they, the Persians, knew and cherished, they immediately obliged, thinking that it would enhance the prestige of their kings if the Romans too were to learn what kind of men they were together with their numbers and the order and manner in which the succession has been maintained. What Sergius did then was to take the names and dates and principal events and put them into good Greek...[Then he] brought me all his material, urging me to fulfill the purpose for which it had been entrusted to him. And that is exactly what I have done. Consequently, even if there are some discrepancies between my account of the reign of Kawad and that given by Procopius, we must follow the authority of the Persian documents and credit their contents with greater veracity.

b. *Narrations of contemporary events*. Another source available to the compilers of the national history was the relation of the actual events by professional and talented scribes, who sometimes witnessed, if they did not actually take part in, the events³³. Thus, we are told³⁴:

When Xusrau Parvêz concluded his wars with Bahrām-i Čōbīn and consolidated his rule over the empire, he ordered his secretary to write down an account of those wars and related events in full, from the beginning to the end. The secretary complied, and when they read off the narrative to Xusrau, its preface did not please him. Thereupon a young secretary wrote an eloquent and rhetorical prologue to the work and presented it to the king. Xusrau

Parvêz was delighted with it and ordered the promotion of the young scribe to a higher grade.

The narrator could be a secretary, a minstrel, or anyone who knew the events. Thus, Hormazd, son of Anōšēravān, having been blinded and imprisoned, asked for³⁵:

Some noble cavalier scarred with long fight
To talk to me of warfare and the chase,
And some old sage to hold discourse of kings,
Bringing to me a written book (*navišta yak-ī daftar*) to abate
My pain and misery.

The chronicling of recent events was a delicate matter³⁶; some chapters, therefore, had to be revised once a major hero had died³⁷.

c. *The "Ctesian method"*. Iranian compilers of a national history sometimes used what we may term the "Ctesian method" of anachronism whereby old history was enriched and its lacunae filled in by the projection of recent events or their reflections into remoter time³⁸. Thus, Alexander was represented as an East Roman Caesar, with armies modelled after Byzantine forces, and a banner with a cross as its device³⁹! Or Frēdōn was said to have treasured the Avesta and Zand in Kangdiz, and Kai Xusrau was made to recite from the Avesta of Zoroaster⁴⁰! Yet, these accounts are useful for the Sasanian period because many aspects of cultural and political history of this epoch are clothed in sagas of older heroes⁴¹.

The "Ctesian method" allowed compilers to fill many chapters of ancient history with memories of recent events. Just as Ctesias used the position of Cyrus the Younger to invent a great satrapy for Bardiya⁴², so did Iranians describe Kai Xusrau's treasures by duplicating those of Xusrau Parvêz⁴³; and used the victory of Sōfrāy (Sōxrā) the Kāren over the Hephtalites to fabricate, as Nöldeke noticed⁴⁴, Nauḍar's tragic end in a region southeast of the Caspian Sea, and Kāren's spectacular victory over the "Turks"⁴⁵.

Another noteworthy instance of the "Ctesian method" is the vivid description of the *Šāhnāma*—ultimately derived from the *X*adāy-nāmāg*—of the great campaign of Kai Xusrau against Afrāsīyāb. Here is a summary of the Iranians' battle array⁴⁶ prior to the decisive battle which was joined in a place not far from Fārāb, somewhere between the Oxus and the border of Dahistān⁴⁷ (see Figure 1).

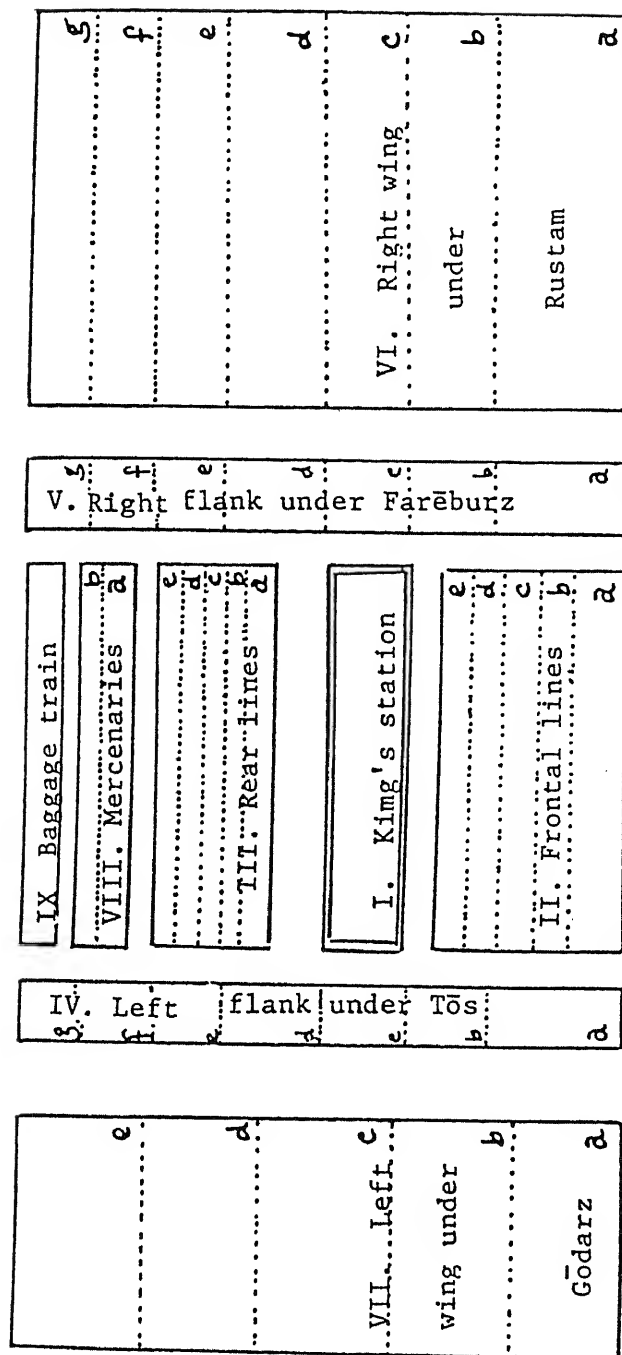


Figure 1. Kai Xusrau's battle-array near the town of Fārb.

- I. Centre: Kai Xusrau with cavalry swordsmen.
- II. Frontal lines: a. Bactrian archers on foot; b. Elephants carrying little towers in which archers were positioned; Zanga-i Šāvurān with Ctesiphonian warriors guarding them; c. Infantry equipped with long lances and shields; d. Gēlānī archers with shields; e. Cavalry archers.
- III. Rear lines: a. Gurgēn-i Mēlād [i.e., the Mihrān] with men of Rey; b, c. Bēžan and Rahām [of the Kāren family]; d. Zaraspians; e. Pūršasprians.
- IV. Right flank, commanded by Tōs, who carried the Imperial banner (*Kāvīyān-i Daraḡš*): a. Manōšān, king of Khuzistan; b. Gōrān Šāh; c. Āraš, king of Kirman; d. Šayyā' of Yemen; e. Ērij, king of Kābul; f. Manōčihr, son of Āraš; g. Pērōz, king of Farčagān.
- V. Left flank under Farēburz: a. Princes of the royal family with their men; b. Šammāx, king of Asōristān; c. Gēva, king of Dāvar; d. Tuxār, king of Dāhistān; e. Zuhair, leader of the Arabs; f. Nastōh, with the Central Mesopotamians.
- VI. Right wing, under Rustam: a. The Zābulī forces; b. The Caucasian mercenaries under Gēv the Kāren; c. Āva; d. Samangān; e. Barta; f. Kōhyār; g. Zarārah; h. Kāren and Gustahm.
- VII. Left wing under Gōdarz the Kāren: a. Haḡēr; b. Šēdōš; c. Men of Barda'; d. Men of Ardabīl.
- VIII. Outer rear: a. Roman mercenaries⁴⁸; b. Moorish mercenaries⁴⁸.
- IX. Baggage train guarded by Andēmān, son of Tōs.

Many of these names are unfamiliar in Firdaus's narrative of Kai Xusrau's reign, and it is obvious that such a detailed and careful description stemmed from a written record which, necessarily, related the arrangement of a Sasanian army. The mention of the Yemenite, Roman, Moorish and Caucasian units proves that this army served Xusrau Anōšēravān. It may be safely concluded, therefore, that we have here a document describing the battle order of Xusrau Anōšēravān prior to his decisive combat with the Hephtalites, whom Persian sources often refer to by the general term "Turks".

3. Date of composition

It is said that whenever Bahrām V (Gōr) held a feast, "he asked for the *Book of Kings* (*Nāma-yi Xusravān*)" to be read in his presence⁴⁹, and that in audience, "many stories were narrated to him, mentioning

Jamšēd and Frēdōn”⁵⁰. Bahrām himself reflects, in a speech to his nobles, on historical events⁵¹: “Down from Hōšang ... up to Kai Kawāḍ ...,” “Their reputation is their monument.” Although the reference to Kai Kawāḍ is probably an anachronistic indication (pointing to Kawāḍ, father of Anōšēravān, see below), the statement nevertheless implies that from the time of Bahrān Gōr the national history was in the process of compilation into written records. Indeed, from the fourth century, old names such as Zarēr, Kawāḍ, Jāmāsp, Kāūs and Xusrau, began to be used by members of the Sasanian family⁵². This and the fact that the ancient royal title Kavī (*KD* or *KDI*) appears on coins in addition to the usual Sasanian honorifics (e.g. *KDI YZDKRTI MLKAN MLKA*) = Kai Yazdigard Šāhānšāh⁵³, both point to the currency or revival of the old stories.

By the time of Xusrau Anōšēravān the history of ancient Iran was definitely compiled in a coherent form and kept in the treasury as a national document⁵⁴. It was this *Book of Kings* which Hormazd desired to be read to him⁵⁵. Under Xusrau Parvēz, much new material was added to the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*, and this then became the main source of all early Islamic histories on ancient Iran, which—as Nöldeke noted—precisely for this reason are in agreement with one another till the death of Xusrau Parvēz but vary considerably on the history of his successors⁵⁶.

A hitherto unnoticed piece of evidence gives the exact date of that revision of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* which was ordered by Xusrau Parvēz. This is contained in the description of the world which the compilers of the *Šāhnāma* of ‘Abū Manšūr ‘Abd al-Razzāq drew from much older sources and included in their prologue to that work⁵⁷. There one has the remarkable statements that “Ērānšahr stretches from the Āmūya (Oxus) to the River of Egypt (i.e., the Nile) (*Ērānšahr az Āmūya ast tā Rūd-i Miṣr*)”, and that *Rūm* (i.e., the Byzantine Empire) and *Barber land* (i.e., North Africa) were neighbors of Ērānšahr⁵⁸. Now, the only time that the Sasanian Ērānšahr was so expanded westwards as to border on the Nile and next to the Berber Land was during the years A.D. 615-22, when Xusrau Parvēz’ generals conquered Egypt⁵⁹. We are, therefore, justified in concluding that the revision of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* ordered by Xusrau Parvēz was made in c. 620⁶⁰.

A final chapter was added to the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* just after the Arab conquest and the death of Yazdigard III⁶¹. It contained⁶² lamentations over the loss of dignity, religion and empire, and some sort of prediction that a savior would rise and destroy the foreigners and restore Iranian monarchy⁶³. This often quoted and usually misunderstood

chapter may have been written by some Christian scholars. Firstly, it depicts Christian priests as most nationalistic and likeable; they lamented the death of Yazdigard with bitterness but “buried” him with proper rites and had no doubt that he would go to Paradise⁶⁴. Secondly, the “Letter of Rustam-i Farruxzād to his brother”, which is a part of the epilogue⁶⁵, grieves over the loss of the Sasanian empire but predicts a resurrection of Iran’s might “in four hundred years time”⁶⁶. From other sources we know that in the early Islamic period the predictions gained currency that the Arab supremacy would start declining about 360 years after the birth of Muḥammad⁶⁷, and that the appearance of the Yājūj and Mājūj and the rise of an Islamic Messiah (Mahdī) as well as the Return of Jesus from Heaven should all occur in c. 400 of the Islamic Era⁶⁸. As it can be seen, the appointed time is the arrival of the year 1000 of the Christian Era, which forecasters connected with the appearance of many supernatural and dreadful happenings. The figure 400 in the “Letter of Rustam”, therefore, seems to have come from a Christian source, possibly from Marv, and adapted to Zoroastrian “*hazāra*” (millennary) scheme. Contrary to the general assumption, the prediction has nothing to do with the accession of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and it did not represent Ferdowsi’s own concept.

4. Three versions of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*

The Sasanian *Xʷadāy-nāmag* had several versions which differed in some details from one another⁶⁹ and the variations in the Arabic *siyar al-mulūks* were so substantial that of twenty-one recensions, no two agreed completely⁷⁰. The accounts on Gayōmarθ as given in several works based on the Arabic translations of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* also point to two versions (each with variations) of the official Sasanian chronicle⁷¹, one regarded Gayōmarθ as the first man as well as the first king, the other described him only as the first man and gave the position of first king to Hōšang. Similarly, the variations in the accounts given on Tahmōriθ, Jamšēd, and Krašāsp and so on, stemmed from the differences between the two “royal” and “priestly” versions of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*. Thus, as Taqizāda pointed out long ago⁷², Ḥamza remarks that Ibn al-Muqaffa’ and Muḥammad b. Jahm, the two earliest redactors of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*, had failed to narrate a chapter of it concerning the creation of the world and of Gayōmarθ. Then Ḥamza summarizes the omitted chapter but starts with the statement, “Thus I read in a book wherein it was quoted from the scripture of the Persians called *Ābistā*

[i.e., Avesta] that ..."⁷³. It may be recalled that the written Avesta, which was set down in its final form under Xusrau Anōšeravān and re-edited by the order of Xusrau Parvēz, was an encyclopedia of the sciences—including history—which were available to Sasanian scholar-priests⁷⁴. Indeed, certain parts (*nask*) of the Avesta gave detailed accounts of some phases of ancient Iranian history, and one part, *Čiθradāta* > *Čihrdād nask*, was entirely devoted to Iranian history, and, as its summary in the *Dēnkard* (VIII. 13)⁷⁵ shows, it contained particulars about the race of mankind; the formation of the first man, Gayōmarθ, the first couple, Mašīya and Mašīyāna, and the distribution of their progeny into the six regions (*kišvar*) which are around Xvanīraθ. The *Čihrdād* went on to give a world history⁷⁶—The evolution of law, custom and cultivation; the establishment of kingship by Hōšang the Pēšdād; the reigns of his successors, Taxmōrūp (Tahmōriθ) and Yim; the usurpation of Dahāk, a descendant of Tāž, brother of Hōšang and father of the Tāzikān (Arabs); his overthrow by Frēdōn, the latter's conquest of Māzandarān, and his division of the Seven Climes between his sons—Salm, Tūž (Tūr) and Airīk (Ērij); the marriage of these three princes with the daughters of Patsrobo, King of the Arabs; their off-springs; the reign of Manōčīhr, the scion of Ērij, over Iran; and the wars of *Frāsīyāv* (> *Afrāsīyāb*) of Tūrān against Ūzuva > Zū of Iran; the re-establishment of the Iranian monarchy under Kai Kawād; the reign of his grandson⁷⁷, Kai Ūs, and of Kai Xusrau, son of Sīyāvaxš; the story of the descendants of Salm, Tūr and Ērij down to the reigns of Kai Luhrāsp and Kai Vištāsp; the "coming of Zartušt to conference with Ahuramazdā" [i.e., his "appearance"]; and the reigns of later kings, particularly the Sasanians. It also included⁷⁸ an account of the family of Ātūrpād son of Mārspent up to Manōčīhr.

This last reference, and the present tense used for the reign of the Sasanians⁷⁹ indicate that the *Čihrdād*'s account was mainly compiled in the time of Šāpūr II, perhaps by Ātūrpād himself. It agrees substantially with the narrative of the "royal" *Xʷadāy-nāmag*⁸⁰, but naturally laid more emphasis on religious aspects of the history of Iran. Thus, the twentieth section of *Sūdgar nask* related⁸¹ that when Frēdōn smote Dahāk, the giants of Māzandarān invaded Xvanīraθ and caused great harm and destruction. People complained to Frēdōn: "Why did you smite Dahāk, who was a good ruler as to prerogative, so that danger was kept away by him and his agent protected this region from the Mazandaranians?"⁸² This story, particularly the benevolent aspects of Dahāk's rule, did not appeal to the compilers of the "royal" version of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*. Similarly, the twenty-first section of *Sūdgar nask*

represented the rule of Kāūs more sympathetically than did early Islamic chronicles which reflect the "royal" version of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*⁸³. It related that Kāūs reigned with triumph, over the earth of seven regions; and restrained "the many idolaters of Māzandarān who are the ruin of the world ..."⁸⁴.

Yet a third version of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* emphasizing achievements of the great families of Ērānšahr, and to which the designation "heroic" version may be given, is traceable in our sources.

Firstly, the "priestly" version gave no prominence to Rustam, nor did it describe the circumstances of his death. The "royal" version did name him among the paladins of Ērānšahr, but played down his role as the supreme hero of the Kayanid period, and reported his death at the hand of Bahman-Ardašēr, the great champion of the Sasanian tradition⁸⁵. Against this background, we find that certain recensions of the Iranian history which go back to Sasanian official chronicles depict Rustam as the bravest of the brave, the invincible savior of Iran and the main support of the Kyanian dynasty⁸⁶, adding that he died before Bahman's accession. Some of these materials may have been collected from various sagas independent of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*, but their inclusion in serious histories proves that they agreed substantially with certain editions of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* which were neither "royal" nor "priestly".

Secondly, several families of the Sasanian period, namely, the Kāren, the Sūrēn, and the Mihrān, are depicted anachronistically in some recensions of the Iranian tradition as rivals of the royal house of Kayān. Just as the Sasanians claimed sovereignty by right of descent from Kai Vištāsp—the royal patron of Zoroaster—so did these families allege that they had been "established" in their fiefs and in their elevated positions by the same Kai Vištāsp⁸⁷. Besides, they boasted descent from the Arsacid kingly house, and were thus *the* Parθavā (Parthians) > *Pahlavāns* "heroes" of Ērānšahr⁸⁸. Such a prominence was not given to these families in the Avesta and its derivations. Neither did the "royal" version of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* bestow upon them so elevated a position, but emphasized, instead, their roles as celebrated *bandas* (subjects) of the Great King. A "heroic" version of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* could have been responsible for the extraordinary importance accorded the *Pahlavāns* in the national epic and history and for the occasional use (albeit in disguise) of the Arsacid Era (see below); and the outstanding qualities attributed to the House of Kāren suggests that it was some members of this family who had compiled a version of the national history most partial towards them.

Thirdly, the “royal” and “priestly” versions of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* represent Kai Vištāsp as a Constantine of Zoroastrianism, and Bahman-Ardašēr as the great patron of the Good Faith and the author of much prosperity for Ērānšahr⁸⁹. These very kings, however, appear in the Persian national epic⁹⁰ as treacherous, short-sighted, malignant and heartless sovereigns who disregarded their pledges, ill-rewarded their subjects and caused great harm to the people. This cannot be merely the influence of the sagas upon historical records; rather, the Bahman-Ardašēr of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* has many features in common with the Sasanian Ardašēr, whose ruthless effort to root out pro-Arsacid opposition among the provincial lords seems to be transferred to his Kayanid namesake. Similarly, the endeavour of Ardašēr-i Pāpakān to make Zoroastrianism the state religion must have resulted in the destruction of many cult temples⁹¹, and the memory of such acts would have been kept but reshaped into malicious efforts by the royal patron of Zoroaster Kai Vištāsp, to destroy Rustam and his house, who had refused the new faith. Again, the royal tradition (represented by Firdausī)⁹² and the priestly one (preserved in the *Rivāyāti-i Dārāb Hurmizdyār*)⁹³ call Ardašēr II of the Sasanian dynasty the Benedict (*Nikūkār*), but the *Pahlavanic* version (as rendered in Ṭabarī⁹⁴, ʾAḥlībī⁹⁵ and the *Fārs-nāma*)⁹⁶ accuses him of excessive cruelty and misrule. Unless we assume the existence of a version of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* with strong “*Pahlavanic*” sympathies, the tradition of Kai Vištāsp, Bahman-Ardašēr, and Ardašēr II become inexplicable. Some minor discrepancies were obviously orthographical, as Nöldeke rightly pointed out⁹⁷.

5. Origins of the Chronological Scheme in the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*

One great defect of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* as a true history of ancient Iran was its lack of precision in chronology. The Seleucids and Parthians had used dynastic eras, but the Sasanians reverted to the old tradition of counting by regnal years of each king⁹⁸. The chronological scheme of the *Xʷadāy-nāmag* followed this practice, but used the traditional millenary (*hazāra*) system as its corner stone⁹⁹. There were, however, two dates which Sasanian chroniclers had learned from their predecessors. One was the appearance (i.e., the birth) of Zoroaster 258 years before “Alexander”, (this had been obtained by reinterpreting the interval between the Babylonian accession of Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C. and the epochal year of the Seleucid Era in 311 as the Period “From Zoroaster [’s Call] till ‘Alexander’”)¹⁰⁰. The second was the fact

that Ardašēr ascended the throne 538 years after “Alexander”¹⁰¹. In both cases, the term “Alexander” meant “the Era of Alexander”, which was another name for the Seleucid Era¹⁰².

a. *The Seleucid Era Identified as the “Era of Zoroaster”*. A major stage in the development of the traditional chronology was the reduction, allegedly by Ardašēr-i Pāpakān, of the 474 years of the Arsacid rule to 266 (or 260) years. The fullest account of this measure is given by Masʿūdī as follows¹⁰³:

There is a great difference of opinion between the Iranians and other nations concerning the chronology of Alexander, and many people have not taken notice of this point which is one of the state and religious secrets of the Iranians, and from my personal investigations in the provinces of Fārs and Kirmān and other regions of Iran, it became apparent that apart from the *mōbaḍs* and *hērbaḍs* and scholars, very few are acquainted with it; nor is there any mention of it in books dealing with Iranian history and other works on general history and chronology. And that state and religious secret is the following. Zoroaster, the son of Porūšasp and grandson of Spitamān, states in the Avesta, which according to the Iranians is the holy scripture revealed to Zoroaster from the heaven, that when 300 years passed (from his time), a disaster would befall the empire but their religion would survive; however, when a millennium is passed, both the empire and the faith would perish. Now, Zoroaster appeared in the time of Kai Vištāsp, the son of Kai Luhrāsp, and between him and Alexander was a period of nearly (*naḥwa*) 300 years, and Ardašēr-i Pāpakān obtained the kingship just over 510 years after Alexander and succeeded in subjugating all countries. And when he observed that no more than 200 years remained of the whole millennium, he resolved upon prolonging the length of the rulership (in his family) by another two centuries, for it was feared that when the remaining 200-year period ended, people firmly believing the words of their prophet—who had predicted the downfall of both the state and the religion—would not defend their country with determination and would refuse to serve their king. Ardašēr, therefore, reduced almost by half the 500-year interval between himself and Alexander, counting of the petty kings only some rulers with a total reign of 260 years and ignoring the rest¹⁰⁴. He then spread the word throughout the realm to the effect that his own appearance and his overcoming of the petty kings and his triumph over Ardavān, who was superior to all of them and had more armed forces than the

rest, had occurred 260 years after Alexander. And so the chronology was *officially fixed* in this way, and it was published; and the variation which exists between the Iranians and other nations regarding the date of Alexander owes its origin to this act, and the disorder in the chronology of the Petty Kings is likewise due to the same measure¹⁰⁵.

As H. Lewy¹⁰⁶, S.H. Taqizāda¹⁰⁷ and W.B. Henning¹⁰⁸ have explained, the "secret" involved the identification of the Seleucid Era with the epochal year of the millennium of Zoroaster, whereby Ardašēr's "Ctesiphon accession¹⁰⁹" in A.D. 226/7 (= 538 Seleucid Era) was placed 538 years after Zoroaster, or (538-258 =) 280 years after "Alexander", with the result that the Parthian period was curtailed to (280-14 =) 266 years. The *purpose* of this equation and its *author*, however, remain problematic. This development was not the consequence of "an innocent mistake¹¹⁰" but a deliberate attempt with a specific aim, for the Parthians and the Manichaeans had also taken similar measures (see below). Again, the view that it was Ardašēr who falsified the chronology is open to question. Having just created a large, mighty and well-organized empire, Ardašēr had no reason to fear that it would soon collapse. Besides, the Arsacids and Seleucus Eras were current in his time, and everyone knew that he had vanquished Arda-vān in the year 472 of the "Royal reckoning" (as the Arsacid Era was known) and 535 of the "Former reckoning" (as the Seleucid Era was then called). Had Ardašēr identified the Seleucid Era with the beginning of the millennium of the prophet in order to create an "Era of Zoroaster", his own son, Šāpūr, would have used the new era when recording the dates of the accessions of his grandfather, father and himself, instead of indicating the regnal years by counting from the royal fires kindled at each king's coronation¹¹¹. Nor would Mānī have referred to the Seleucid Era under the name of the "Era of Babylonian astronomers" when dating Ardašēr's regnal years in the *Šābūhragān*, which he wrote for Šāpūr in Persian¹¹².

Ardašēr did effect a chronological "reform", but this was the unreasonable revival of the Achaemenid system of dating by regnal years, a measure which put the most useful chronological devices of his time, the Seleucid and Arsacid Eras, out of official use; and it soon became difficult to keep an accurate account of the past chronology. Even the association of the "Former reckoning" (Seleucid Era) with Alexander became restricted to Syriac literature (from whence it later re-appeared in Iranian sources), so that some centuries after Ardašēr one referred to

the Seleucid Era merely as "the Era", in the same way as the Christian Era is used in our time¹¹³. Subsequently, the Manichaeans, who took pains in translating every alien concept to one familiar to themselves, "translated" the Seleucid Era into the epochal year of the twelfth and the last millennium of their world age¹¹⁴. By the accession of Yazdigard I (A.D. 339 = 710 Seleucid Era), only one generation had remained from the millennium of Zoroaster (399 + 311 + 258 = 968), and the ever present fear of the calamities associated with the millenary system of the world's age must have made the postponement of history an urgent necessity. Later tradition assigns a calendrical "reform" to this Yazdigard¹¹⁵. Doubts have been expressed as to the validity of this tradition¹¹⁶. However, Yazdigard's earnest effort to settle problematic disorders of his Christian subjects and to give them an "Iranian" organized church suggests that he was deeply interested in matters which related the church to the throne¹¹⁷. Furthermore, *dastūr* Yazdigard, the official whom King Yazdigard commissioned to carry out the "reform", is actually well-known as a grand minister of King Yazdigard¹¹⁸. It is highly probable, therefore, that Yazdigard's "reform" really involved the identification of the epochal year of Zoroaster's millennium with the Seleucid Era which in his environment had lost its connexion with Alexander and was known as "the Era", the "Era of Babylonian astronomers", and the "Former reckoning"¹¹⁹. This would have placed the accession of Yazdigard 710 years after Zoroaster, and since of these 710 years, 172 had been taken (in the official chronology cf. Agathias IV, 24-6) by earlier Sasanians, 258 by the interval between Zoroaster and Alexander and 14 by the latter, only 266 years (= Agathias II, 267: "some 270 years") remained to be assigned to the Parthians¹²⁰. The authoritativeness of this "reform" was claimed by attributing it to Ardašēr, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty. The scheme was widely accepted. Only the astronomers, who had access to older data, refused to follow it, and continued to place the birth of Zoroaster 258 years before the Seleucid Era or 240 years before Alexander's Persian accession¹²¹.

b. *The Arsacid Era identified as the "Era of Zoroaster"*. The Parthians had used their "Royal Era" (began 248/7 B.C.), either alone in purely Iranian contexts, or side by side with the "Former reckoning" (= the Seleucid Era) in general cases¹²². Arda-vān, whom Ardašēr vanquished, erected a stele for his satrap at Susa in "the year 462 [= A.D. 216/15] month of Spandārmāt, day of Mihr"¹²³. One cannot think that this era completely vanished with the rise of the Sasanians,

for the Arsacids continued to rule over Armenia, and great Parthian families retained their exalted positions in Iran itself¹²⁴. It was recently shown that¹²⁵ despite the Sasanian revival of the dating by regnal years of individual kings, the Parthians rescued the era which originally marked their rise to power¹²⁶, by giving it a religious significance. Their claim that they had been established in their outstanding social rank by Kavī Vištāsp¹²⁷, meant that the date of the founding of their empire (marked by the "Royal Reckoning") could smoothly be transferred to the establishment of the great Parthian families by the royal patron of Zoroaster. Thus, the Arsacid Era came to indicate an "Era of Zoroaster" which supposedly began with his millennium. The conclusive evidence for this comes from the "200 and odd years" (= 203¹²⁸) which the original reductor of the *Greater Bundahišn*¹²⁹ and one of Firdausī's sources¹³⁰ allowed for the Parthian period, because 203 years plus 14 years of Alexander and the 258 years separating the latter from Zoroaster give a total of 475 years, and, in fact, the "Ctesiphon accession" of Ardašēr postdated the Arsacid Era by (248 B.C. + 227 =) 475 years.

We can now go one step further. The Sasanians accepted this Parthian version with a slight modification and cleverly used it to further their own cause: they shifted the beginning of Zoroaster's millennium from his birth to his Call (the 30-year gap thus created was duly filled with the reign of a fictitious queen, Humāy, represented as the daughter of Bahman-Ardašēr) in order to place the Battle of Hurmazdgān (28 April 224), which decided the fate of the Arsacids, in the 501st year (= 471 + 30) of the Arsacid Era which was now the "Era of Zoroaster". No religious propaganda would have better served the Sasanians than the conviction that their establishment had come in the *middle* of the millennium of Zoroaster. In one respect, this made Ardašēr a Zoroastrian Messiah, *opening* the second half of a millennium which had *commenced* with the prophet himself. The proof for this tradition comes from two pieces of evidence. One is a prediction attributed to Ardašēr that the kingship would remain in his line "for five hundred years"¹³¹, till the *end* of the millennium¹³². The second informs us that when Bahrām-i Čōbīn, himself of the Arsacid descent, assumed kingship and attempted to revive the Parthian dynasty¹³³, he proclaimed that since the murder of King Ardavān by the commoner Ardašēr "five hundred years have elapsed"¹³⁴, and the blessed moment of the overthrow of the Sasanians "has arrived"¹³⁵. Further, upon his accession, Bahrām prayed that the kingship remain in his house "from

now till one thousand years"¹³⁶. Clearly, he regarded himself as the expected Saviour with whom the eleventh Zoroastrian millennium was hoped to begin. His immense popularity suggests that his claims were not taken lightly¹³⁷.

c. *The final revisions in A.D. 555*. Under Xusrau Anōšēravān, some Greek and Syriac literature became available to Persian scholars through Pahlavi translations, and the Seleucid Era came once more to serve as the basis for chronological computations, and its Syriac name, the "Era of Alexander", or simply "Alexander", was likewise revived. A natural consequence of this readoption was the revelation of the "state and religious secret" concerning the date of Alexander: his "Era" had commenced 19 (or 18) years after his Persian accession (i.e., 330-312/11 B.C.), and what many Iranians had come to believe as the "Era of Zoroaster" had in reality been the alien era which was now once more called after the hated conqueror! The embarrassment and debates caused by this discovery have left clear traces in our sources. In the 25th regnal year of Xusrau Anōšēravān (A.D. 555), an assembly of court astronomers convened to correct the source of all chronological computations: the *Royal Astronomical Canon* (*Zīj-i Šahrīyārān*)¹³⁸, and there is reason to believe that at this convention the date of Zoroaster also was debated¹³⁹.

Three solutions were proposed. Some deducted 18 years [from Alexander to the Seleucid Era], and placed Zoroaster 240 years before the Conqueror¹⁴⁰ and Anōšēravān's 25th year in (240 + 14 + 266 + 331 [since Ardašēr's victory in 224] =) 851st year of the millennium¹⁴¹. A second group took the term "till Alexander" to mean till the Conqueror, and dated Zoroaster's birth [and Kai Vištāsp's accession] to (258 + 19 =) 277 years before the Seleucid Era¹⁴². A third group, however, continued to interpret "till Alexander" as "till the Seleucid Era", and counting 228 years from Zoroaster's Call or 258 years since his birth, they placed Anōšēravān's 25th year at (258 + 14 + 266 + 328 [since Ardašēr's Ctesiphon accession in 227] =) 866th year of the millennium¹⁴³. This view came to prevail, but because of the incorporation of Humāy's 30 years, it had to shift the epochal year of Zoroaster's millennium from his birth to his Call¹⁴⁴.

d. *The apocalyptic version*. The Arab conquest was perceived as the calamity foretold by Zoroaster at the end of his millennium. This forced the theologians to "correct" the traditional chronology by placing the fall of the Persian empire 1,000 years after Zoroaster¹⁴⁵. Of this millennium, 426 years belonged to the Sasanians, 14 to Alexander

and 266 years to the Arsacids; hence, the interval between Zoroaster and Alexander had to be increased to (1,000—426 + 266 + 14 =) 294 years, that is, to “nearly” (as Mas’ūdī specifies) 300 years. Then, in order to make the sum into a round and fabulous figure, 6 years were subtracted from the Parthian period, which was thus “officially fixed” (as Mas’ūdī emphasized) at 260 years, and the interval between Alexander and Zoroaster increased to (294 + 6 =) 300 years. Amazingly, this concocted chronology has at times been favoured¹⁴⁶ even though it could not apportion the sum of 300 years to the kings whom it accepted as historic, and had to reduce the 538-year interval between “Alexander” and Ardešēr to 510 years! Not so the version based on the figure 258¹⁴⁷.

NOTES

¹ “Iranian National History”, in E. Yarshater, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran III* 1 (1983), 359–480.

² Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 342.

³ E.G., J. Mohl’s Introduction to his ed. and tr. of the *Šāhnāma: Le livre des Rois*, Paris 1838; Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden. Aus der arabischen Chronik des Ṭabarī*, Leiden (1879), XIV ff.; idem, “Das iranische National-epos”, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie II* Strassburg (1896–1904), 130–211 (rev. ed., *Das iranische Nationalepos*, Leipzig 1920); Baron Victor von Rosen, “K voprosu ob arabskich perevodach Chudai Name”, in *Vostocnye Zametki*, St. Petersburg (1895), 153–91 (reviewed by J. Kirste, “Über das *Khodāi-nāme*”, in *WZKM*, X, 1896, 322–26); H. Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois de Perse* [Ṭa’ālibī’s], Paris (1900), xili ff.; S.H. Taqizāda, “Firdausi”, *Kāva* (Berlin), N.S. I–II (1920–21 see also n. 72); M.M. Qazvinī, *Bīst Maqāla*, II, ed. A. Iqbāl, Tehran (1313/1934), 1 ff., 20 ff.; A. Christensen, *L’Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd rev. ed., Copenhagen (1944), 59 ff.; W. Barthold, “Zur Geschichte des persischen Epos”, *ZDMG*, ICVIII (1944), 121–27; O. Klima, “Wie sah die persische Geschichtsschreibung in der vorislamischen Periode aus?” *Archiv Orientální* XXXVI (1968), 213–32; M. Boyce, “Middle Persian Literature”, in *HO*, Abt I, Bd. IV, Abschn. 2, Lief. 1, Leiden (1968), 57–60; M.N. Osmanov, “Xudāynāmāh va Šāhnāmāh-ye ma’āxiḍ-i Firdausī, in *Jašn-nāmā-ye Muḥammad Parvīn Gunābādī*, Tehran (1975), 286–332.

⁴ Based on chapter seven of my *A History of Iranian Historiography*, compiled in Göttingen (1980–83); I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Dr. W. Hinz for valuable help, and to the authorities of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for their generous support of the research.

⁵ “What thou shalt do, that may Ahuramazdā make successful for thee”: Darius, Behistun [Old Pers.] IV 75–6.

⁶ Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, xiv ff.; *Nationalepos*, 12 ff. For a detailed account of the contents see Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 370 ff., 412 ff.

⁷ For some examples see A. Christensen, *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l’Iran antique*, Paris (1936), 43 ff.

⁸ So already Agathias, *Histories* [tr. J.D. Frendo, Berlin (1975)], IV, 30.2: ἀπομνημονεύματα and (II 27:8) βασιλικαὶ διφθέραι [cf. Firdausī’s *Daftar-i Xusravān* which exactly renders the latter Greek term: *Šāhnāma*, Moscow ed., VII, 1968. 339:599]. See also Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, 13.

⁹ *Šāhnāma*, VII, 331:446.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 323:315.

¹¹ See in detail on this title Ch. Bartholomae, “Zur Kenntniss der mittelliranischen Mundarten”, *Sb. d. Heidelb. Ak. d. Wiss.*, (1920), 1–53.

¹² So *Mujmal al-Tawārīx wa’l-Qiṣaṣ*, ed. M.T. Bahār, Tehran (1318/1939), 85; cf. *Tarjama-yi Tafsiṣ-i Ṭabarī*, ed., Ḥ. Yaṣmā’ī, Tehran, II (1339/1960), 348.

¹³ Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, xiv; *Nationalepos*, 13.

¹⁴ See E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, I, Cambridge (1902), 333 f, for the case of Afšīn who was accused of having assumed “divine title”.

¹⁵ Such as *nāy-x*adāy* > *nāx*adā* “admiral”; *dihx*adā* “village-master”; *katx*adā* “clan lord” and figuratively: “village lord” and “bride-groom”, etc.

¹⁶ E.G. Sāmān-X*adāh “Lord of Sāmān”; Buxārā-X*adāh “king of Buxara”; Gūzgānān-X*adāh “King of Gūzgānān”, etc. Firdausī used *x*adāy* in the sense of “king” mostly in connection with Kabul (Kābul-X*adāy, *Šāhnāma*, I, 162:598; 205:1368; 227:1757), but he has once Ērān-X*adāy “King of Ērānšahr” used of Ērīj (*ibid.*, I, 78:302).

¹⁷ Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, *Ta’rīx Sinī Mulūk al-Ard wa’l-Anbiyā*, ed. J.M.E. Gottwald, Leipzig (1844), 63. Cf. Ṭabarī, III, 343: the city of Marv itself, where Yazdigard III was murdered, received the epithet *X*adāh.duṣman* “King’s enemy”.

¹⁸ Thus, Firdausī, *Šāhnāma*, IX, 377:819, 379:835, changed the epithet of Māhōye (*X*adāh.kuṣ*) to *X*adāvand.kuṣ*.

¹⁹ Ḥamza, *op. cit.*, 8, 18.

²⁰ *Mujmal*, loc. cit.

²¹ M. Rostovzeff, “Res Gestae divi Saporis and Dura”, *Berytus VIII* (1943), 17 ff.; A. Sh. Shahbazi, “Iranian Notes 7–13”, *AMI* 19 (1986), [= Festgrüsse W. Hinz], 165 f.; cf. Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 392–93.

²² For “*dabīrān*” of the Sasanian period see Christensen, *L’Iran*, 132 ff.

²³ See R.N. Frye, *The Sasanian Remains of Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr*, Cambridge (Mass. 1973), 50 for a discussion on the local archives and legal documents. See also R. Göbl, *Die Tonbullen von Tacht-e Suleiman*, Berlin (1976), for seals from fire temples.

²⁴ A collection of these materials was gathered in a Sasanian encyclopaedia called *Āyēn-nāmāg* “*Book of Institutions*”, on which see Christensen, *op. cit.*, 62 with references. Also, A. Tafazzoli, “A’in-nāma in *ET*”, p. 692.

²⁵ For examples see Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, 371 f.; Ṭa’ālibī, tr. Zotenberg, 639–40.

²⁶ Bulāduṛī, *Kitāb-i Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. de Goeje, Leiden (1866), 464; see further Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, 354 n. 2; Christensen, *L’Iran*, 393.

²⁷ See A.D.H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Stamp Seals. II: The Sasanian Dynasty*, London (1969), 22 ff.

²⁸ Christensen, *op. cit.*, 394 with n. 2.

²⁹ Cited and translated by L. Gray, “Peace-negotiations and peace-treaties between pre-Muhammadan Persia and other states”, in *J.J. Modi Memorial Volume*, Bombay (1930), 136–53 esp. 147 ff.

³⁰ *History II* 27. 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*, II 27. 8.

³² *Ibid.*, IV 30. 2 ff.

³³ Cf. the case of Mihrān, the *Mahišt.dabīr*, who accompanied Bahrām-i Čōbīn in his expedition against the Turks in order to detail the events, see *Šāhnāma* VIII, 345:521 ff.; cf. 370:936 ff.

³⁴ Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad Baihaqī *Al-Maḥāsīn wa’l-Musawwī*, ed. F. Schwally, Giessen (1902), 481.

³⁵ *Šāhnāma* IX, 13:53 ff. (tr. A.G. Warner and E. Warner, VIII, London 1923, 199).

³⁶ Jāhīz, *Al-Hayawān* VII, 53: Xusrāu Parvēz asked a paladin “whether he had known a man more courageous than himself. He replied that he had, and if His Majesty would allow him to speak his mind he would reveal his identity. Xusrāu gave his permission, and the man named Bahrām-i Čōbīn, narrating a case of utmost bravery and manliness that

he had witnessed of him. This, however, was very unpleasant to Xusrau's ears, for he held Bahrām as his erstwhile enemy. Understandably, the story was not in the *Xʷadāy-nāmag*!

³⁷ Cf. the denigration of Šērōye and Šahrvarāz in early Islamic sources.

³⁸ See J. Marquart, *Philologus*, Suppl. VI (1895), 559 ff., 594 ff.

³⁹ *Šāhnāma* VI, 384:⁵⁴⁻⁵; VII, 54:⁸⁷⁶, 59:^{959 f.}, 96:¹⁶⁴¹.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, V, 248:^{216 f.}, 359:^{2105 f.}, 365:²²⁰⁴, 314:^{3019 f.}

⁴¹ See in detail Yarshater, *Camb. Hist. Iran* III/1, 402 ff.

⁴² Marquart, *op. cit.*, 595 ff.; A. Sh. Shahbazi, *Cyrus the Great, Founder of the Persian Empire*, Shiraz (1970), 328-29.

⁴³ *Šāhnāma* V, 400-402.

⁴⁴ *Nationalepos*, 9.

⁴⁵ E. Warner, tr. of *Šāhnāma*, VIII, 171.

⁴⁶ *Šāhnāma* V, 242 ff. (tr. IV, 146 ff.).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, V, 256:⁴³¹⁻⁴²; 286:⁸⁶⁰ (tr. IV, 183).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, V, 245:¹⁷²; *sipāhī zi Rūm-u zi Barbarsitān*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, VII, 323:³¹⁵.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, VII, 325:³⁵⁰⁻⁵¹.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 338:^{574 ff.} (tr. VII, 37-8).

⁵² This important point was adduced by Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, 5. However, his date "from the second half of the fifth century A.D.", probably needs modification. Xusrau occurs as the name of a rival of Bahrām-i Gōr (Dīnawārī, *Axbār al-Ṭiwāl*, Leiden, 1888, 57); Kāūs is met with in the compound surname Kāūsagān by Faustus of Byzantium (1st half of the fourth century, see Christensen, *L'Iran*, 106); and Jāmāsp is known as the name of a brother of Šāpūr II (J. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, 163).

⁵³ See M. Mitchiner, *Oriental Coins and Their Values: The Ancient and Classical World, 600 B.C.-A.D. 650*, London 1978, 159 No. 890 f., 166: Nos. 980 ff. For the title Kayān as the surname of the Sasanians—see *Šāhnāma* VIII, 31:³⁴⁷; 32:³⁶⁴.

⁵⁴ Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, 12 f. cf. *Šāhnāma* VIII, 278:^{3865 ff.}

⁵⁵ Nöldeke, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, xv ff.; *Nationalepos*, 12 ff.

⁵⁷ Qazvīnī, *Bīst Masāla*, II, 30 ff.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 49-51.

⁵⁹ Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, 291 ff.

⁶⁰ A revision of some Avestan texts was likewise ordered by Xusrau Parvēz: Christensen, *L'Iran*, 491.

⁶¹ Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, 13 f.

⁶² As reflected ultimately in the *Šāhnāma*, IX, 311 ff.

⁶³ Cf. the poem on Šāh Bahrām Varjāvand, e.g., W.B. Henning, "A Pahlavi Poem", *BSOAS*, XIII (1950), 641-48.

⁶⁴ *Šāhnāma* IX, 364-68; Ṭabarī III, 346 ff.

⁶⁵ *Šāhnāma* IX, 313 ff.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, IX, 314: 45: *barēn sāliyān čāršad bugdārad*,
ka'z-ēn tuxma [i.e., Sasanian] *gētē kas-ī našmarad*.

⁶⁷ Hamza, p. 155.

⁶⁸ *Tarjama-yi Tafsīr-i Ṭabarī*, I, 197.

⁶⁹ cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos*, 15. See further Yarshater, "Iranian National History", 395 ff. with literature.

⁷⁰ Hamza, 24 quoting Mōbaḍ Bahrām Son of Mardansāh of Fārs.

⁷¹ See J. Khāleqī Muṭlag, "Abū 'Alī Balxī" in E. Yarshater ed., *Ency. of Iran and Islam* [in Persian], I, Tehran (1357/1978), 1073 ff.

⁷² *Kāva* 13 Dec. 1920, [= *Firdausī va Šāhnāma-yi ū*, ed. H. Yāymā'ī, Tehran (1349/1960), 111].

⁷³ Hamza, p. 64.

⁷⁴ For the written Avesta see Christensen, *L'Iran*, 54 ff., 491. The Sasanian Avesta was abridged in the VIII book *Dēnkard* (tr. E.W. West in *SBE XXXVII: Pahlavi Texts* IV, Oxford 1892).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 25-6 (= *Dēnkard* VIII, 13-14). On the *Čīhrdād Nask* see A. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, Copenhagen (1931), 38 and passim; Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 415-35 passion.

⁷⁶ *Dēnkard* VIII 13.5 ff. (= West, 26 ff.).

⁷⁷ More commonly given as "son of Kawād"; on him see Yarshater, *op. cit.*; 444 ff.

⁷⁸ *Dēnkard* VIII.13.18. (= West. 29-30).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* VIII.13.19.

⁸⁰ For details see Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 411 ff. passion.

⁸¹ *Dēnkard* IX.21.8 (= West, 214).

⁸² *Ibid.*, IX.21.17-24 (= West, 216-18).

⁸³ *Ibid.* IX.22, 14 (= West 220-21).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* IX.22.5-12 (= West 221-23).

⁸⁵ cf. Nöldeke, *Nationalepos* 9 ff.; Christensen, *Les Kayanides* 132 ff.; Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 453 ff.

⁸⁶ See especially the judgement of Hurmazd IV: *Šāhnāma* VIII, 345:^{508 ff.}

⁸⁷ Nöldeke-Ṭabarī 437.

⁸⁸ Christensen, *L'Iran* 103 f.; Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 457 ff.

⁸⁹ Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 93 ff.

⁹⁰ As preserved in the *Šālnāma*, *Bahmannāma*, *Āzarbarzīnnāma*, *Frāmarnzāma*.

⁹¹ *The Letter of Tansar*, tr. M. Boyce, Rome (1966) 36, 47; cf. 16-17.

⁹² *Šāhnāma* VII, 258.

⁹³ Ed. M.R. Unvala, Bombay (1942) II, 437, cf. Bīrūnī, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. E. Sachau, London 91879), 123.

⁹⁴ Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, 70.

⁹⁵ ʿa'ālibī, 533.

⁹⁶ Ibn al-Balxī, *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. Le Strange -R.A. Nicolson, Cambridge (1921), 61.

⁹⁷ *Nationalepos*, 15.

⁹⁸ On the Sasanian dating system see A. Christensen in *Revue des arts asiatique* X (1973), 127; W.B. Henning in *Asia Major*, N.S. VI (1957), 115 ff.; R. Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, Braunschweig (1971), 23 f.

⁹⁹ For details see Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 383-87.

¹⁰⁰ A.Sh. Shahbazi, "The 'traditional date of Zoroaster' explained". *BSOAS*, LX (1977), 26 ff. for details.

¹⁰¹ Agathias IV, 24: 1.

¹⁰² Shahbazi, *op. cit.*, 27 f.

¹⁰³ *Kitāb al-Tanbih wa'l-Isrāf*, ed. M.G. de Joeje, Leiden (1897), 97-8.

¹⁰⁴ The "officially fixed" figure 260 is also attested in the Persian version of Ṭabarī's Chronicle, see Shahbazi, *op. cit.*, 27 n. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Ardašēr's alleged falsification of the Arsacid history is likewise recorded by Bīrūnī, *Qāmūn* (cited by S.H. Taqizadeh (Taqizāda), *BSOS* IX/1 (1937), 139 and XI (1940), 128).

¹⁰⁶ "The Genesis of the Faulty Persian Chronology", *JAOS* LXIV/4 (1944), 197 ff.

¹⁰⁷ "The 'Era of Zoroaster'", *JRAS*, 1947, 33-40.

¹⁰⁸ *Zoroaster: Politician or Witch-doctor?* Oxford (1951), 37 ff.

¹⁰⁹ For the problems of Ardašēr's dates see Henning, *Asia Major*, NS, VI (1957), 115.

¹¹⁰ As Henning, *Zoroaster*, 38, stated.

¹¹¹ See above n. 98. This was an Achaemenid custom, cf. Diodorus Siculus, XVII, 114.

¹¹² See Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, 121, 190.

¹¹³ Thus, the Darband inscriptions are dated "in the year 700", that is, in A.D. 389, see the reference in E. Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and His World*, I, Princeton, (1947), 15 (where they are misinterpreted). Similarly, the inscriptions of Tang-i Azad in west Afghanistan are dated "in 1064", that is A.D. 754, see Henning, *BSOAS*, XX (1957), 342.

¹¹⁴ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 39.

¹¹⁵ Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 38, 56, 121; 'Abū Bakr Bahā'al-Dīn Moḥammad b. Aḥmad Abī Bašar al-Xaraqī, *Muntahī al-Iḍrāk*, cited by Taqīzāda, *Gāh Šumārī dar Irān-i Qadīm*, Tehran (1316/1937), 23.

¹¹⁶ E.J. Bickerman, "The 'Zoroastrian Calendar'", *Archiv Orientalni*, XXXV/2 (1967), 197 ff. esp. 202; M. Boyce, *BSOAS*, XXXIII (1970), 528.

¹¹⁷ Christensen, *op. cit.*, 270 f.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹¹⁹ Taqīzāda (*Gāh Šumārī*, 34, 280) and S.H. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran*, Leipzig, 1938, 43, narrowly missed this point because they accepted the report on Yazdigard's calendar reform.

¹²⁰ Cf. esp. Taqīzadeh, *JRAS*, 1947, 1-2, 36 ff.

¹²¹ Shahbazi, *BSOAS*, XL (1977), 28. with reference.

¹²² A.Sh. Shahbazi, "Arsacid Era", in *Ency. Iranica* II (1987), 541 f. with literature.

¹²³ Henning, *Asia Major*, NS, II, 1952, 176.

¹²⁴ Christensen, *L'Iran* 103 ff.; Yarshater, *op. cit.*, 474.

¹²⁵ A.Sh. Shahbazi, "Arsacid Chronology in Traditional History", in *Ency. Iranica* II (1987), 543.

¹²⁶ Cf. Justin, *XLI*, 4.

¹²⁷ See the evidence of Ṭabarī in Nöldeke-Ṭabarī, 437 and *Nationalepos*, 8.

¹²⁸ As was shown in *BSOAS*, LX (1977), 27, n. 19.

¹²⁹ The figure is attested in the oldest manuscript, the Codex DH (ed., Tehran, 1971, p. 109), folio 230 r., line 10 f. The edition by Anklesaria has here copied the version of the *Indian Bundahišn* in order to fill a lacuna (I owe this recognition to my teacher, Professor D.N. MacKenzie). The reference in *BSOAS*, XL (1977), 26 n. 6 was wrong and must be corrected accordingly.

¹³⁰ *Šāhnāma*, Moscow ed., VII, 1968, 115-16.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 190⁶²⁷: *bar ēn bugḍarad sālyān pānšad
buzurgī šumā rā bi-pāyān rasad.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, VIII, 29 ff.; "till the end of the millennium" appears in the *Epistle of Ardašēr* and the *Letter of Tansar*. Bīrūnī (cited by Taqīzāda, *Gāh Šumārī*, 287) reports that "Zoroaster promised Kai Vištāsp that the rulership would remain in his house for 1,000 years".

¹³³ *Šāhnāma*, VIII, 29 ff.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII, 29:³²⁹: *kunūn sāl ēn pānšad bar guḍašt,
sar-i tāj-i Sāsāniān sard gašt.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII, 30:³³⁰ ff. *kunūn taxt-u daihūm rā rōz-i mā'st,
sar-u kār bā baxt-i pērōz-i mā'st...
buzurgī mar Aškāniān rā sazā'st...
kunam tāza 'āyīn-i Mēlād rā.*

And in VII, 420:¹⁷¹⁷ ff. *hamī bēx-i Sāsān zi bun bar kanam,
na ān tuxma rā kard Yazdān zamīn,
gah āmad ki bar xēzad ān āfarīn.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII, 62: *čunīn guft kīn pādīšāhī marā'st,
bi-dīn bar šumā pāk Yazdān gavā'st,
čunīn ham bimānād sālī hazār,
ki az tuxma-yi man buvad šahryār.*

¹³⁷ See K. Czeglédy, "Bāhrām Chobin and the Persian apocalyptic literature", *Acta Orient. Hungarica*, VIII, 1958, 21-43.

¹³⁸ Bīrūnī in *Qānūn*, cited by Taqīzadeh, *BSOS*, IX/1 (1937), 133 f.

¹³⁹ Shahbazi, *BSOAS*, XL, (1977), 30.

¹⁴⁰ So Abu Ma'shar of Balx, cited by Taqīzāda, *Gāh Šumārī* 288 and n. 419.

¹⁴¹ As Bīrūnī (*Qānūn*, cited by Taqīzadeh, *BSOS* IX, 1937, 133 f.) testifies see also *ibid.*, XL (1977), 29-30.

¹⁴² Thus the source used by Firdausī gave Vištāsp 120 years, Bahman 99, Humāy 32, Dārā 12 and Dārā-yi Dārāyān 14 years, a total of 277 years.

¹⁴³ So the ninth-century astronomer Ibn Nawbaxt: Taqīzadeh, *JRAS*, 1947, 35.

¹⁴⁴ Mas'ūdī and Bīrūnī attest to this fact. It is also confirmed (as Herzfeld, *Zoroaster* I, 20, noticed) by the tradition on the Tree of Kišmar (Ibn Funduq, *Tārīx-i Baihaq*, ed. A. Bahmanyār, Tehran 1317/1938, 281-83; B. Spuler, *AMN*, IV, 1971, 113-15): the true explanation of which planted by Zoroaster when he converted Kai Vištāsp (12 years after his Call), the Tree was cut down by Al-Mutawakkil in 232 A.H. (= A.D. 847 or 1159 Seleucid Era) when it had lived for 1405 (the date is written out twice) years. This means that it was planted (1402-1159 =) 246 years before the Seleucid Era (i.e., "Alexander") and that (246 + 12 =) 258 years separated the latter from Zoroaster's Call.

¹⁴⁵ Taqīzāda, *Gāh Šumārī*, 282-86, recognised this fact.

¹⁴⁶ E.g. *Ardāy Vīrāz-nāmag* 1.1. The curious statement of Theodore Bar Khōni that Zoroaster lived 628 years and 7 months before Jesus Christ was much relied on (e.g., Henning, *Zoroaster*, 41 f.) but it is nothing more than a fabrication: noting that Alexander conquered Persia (in 330 B.C.) 17 years and 7 months before the Seleucid Era, Bar Khōni placed Zoroaster $317\frac{7}{12}$ years before the Seleucid Era or $(317\frac{7}{12} + 311 =) 628\frac{7}{12}$ Years B.C.

¹⁴⁷ Pace Professor G. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, Naples, 1980, 166 ff. Agathias, who used official Sasanian records, says (II, 26.1): The Arsacids reigned for "some 270 years [i.e., the 266 year of the other sources], and that (IV, 24, 1): "The Persian kings ruled for two hundred and twenty-eight years" before Alexander "slew" Darius. These are derived from the chronological scheme anchored on to the traditional date of Zoroaster which had placed him "258 years before Alexander"; long before the Arab conquest forced the invention of the figure 300!